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Southern Pine Beetle Fact Sheet
Number 18

PILE-AND-BURN[1]

Felling, piling, and burning infested trees is one of the oldest control methods for the southern pine beetle (SPB) and is effective when properly done. But because of high costs and environmental constraints, the practice has been used sparingly in recent years. All the bark must be completely burned to achieve control. It is not necessary to cut, pile, and burn vacated trees. For practical reasons, infested and vacated trees are usually piled and burned to clear the site for regeneration. Burning can cause wildfires, so it should be restricted to periods of low fire danger. Also, Federal and State air pollution laws must be taken into consideration.

Procedures for Piling-and-Burning

1. Identify and mark all SPB-infested trees.

2. Fell all infested trees and pile them in the center of the infested area.

3. Burn the pile until all infested bark has been thoroughly charred.

4. Do not burn if it cannot be done safely or if it will promote significant soil erosion.

5. Check carefully around the spot to ensure that no green infested trees have been overlooked.

6. Check for breakouts during the next aerial survey. Treat breakouts[2] as needed.

When to Act

Suppression should be a year-round effort made from late spring through fall to control actively spreading infestations. Winter and early spring treatment is also important because it will reduce the potential for spot growth or new spot development later in the spring and summer. Although infestations are concentrated in fewer trees for longer periods of time during the colder months, the spots are harder to detect from the air.

Other Options

The landowner's management objectives will affect the choice of one or several treatment methods. Recommended treatment methods not discussed in this fact sheet include salvage removal, cut-and-leave, and chemical control. SPB Fact Sheets 15, 16, and 17 discuss these three methods, respectively.

This fact is based on information in Agricultural Handbook Number 575, **Direct Control Methods for the Southern Pine Beetle**, by Kenneth Swain, Sr., USDA Forest Service and Michael Remión, South Carolina State Commission of Forestry. The handbook will be published in 1981.

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[1] See Southern Pine Beetle Fact Sheet No. 3 **Setting control priorities for the southern pine beetle.**

[2] When SPB emerging from a treated spot attack neighboring trees, this new infestation is known as a breakout.

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